Five Point Programme for Agriculture Sector

1269. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced a five point programme to give impetus to agriculture and related activities in the country;

(b) if so, the main features of the said programme;

(c) whether Government propose to unveil scheme of information technology for its use in the agricultural sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The salient features of the five point programme announced by the Prime Minister during "Agro Advantage-Maharashtra Conference" on 6th November, 1998 included the following:

(a) Evolving Small Farmers agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) into a high level coordination body at the centre and in the States to promote corporate investments in agri business covering public sector, private sector, cooperatives etc.

(2) Strengthening of Forward Markets Commission to Promote forward deals in more commodities.

(3) Promoting joint ventures abroad to expand trade in farm produce.

(4) Unveiling a National Rural Cooperative Policy and enactment of the long pending Multi State Cooperative Act.

(5) Promotion of Information Technology in agriculture and agro business in a big way.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The details are as follows:

(1) Strengthening of information technology apparatus in the DAC HQ and setting up of National Agriculture Informatics Centre as also live network in respect of major crops from field to DAC Head Quarters.

(2) Centrally Sponsored Scheme to assist States in the field of Information Technology.

(3) Strengthening of field units of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation and their linkages and connectivity with the Head Quarters as also within the field units.

Suicide by Farmers

1270. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of farmers who have committed suicide in different States during 1998 (upto November 1998);

(b) whether Government have made any in-depth study to examine suicide by farmers;

(c) if so, the findings of such a study; and

(d) the details of steps taken to prevent suicide by farmers especially small and marginal farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Decline in Oilseed Production

1271. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that except for a significant rise in soyabean production in 1997-98 all other major oilseeds, particularly, groundnut and mustard have registered a sharp decline; and

(b) the plans of Government of check this decline?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The production of major oilseeds in the country during 1996-97 and 1997-98 is given below:—

Major Oilseed	Production in (000 tonnes)	
Crops	1996-97	1997-98
Groundnut	9023.6	7580.0
Rapeseed and Mustard	6942.3	4940.0
Sunflower	1315.0	1160.0
Soyabean	5201.5	6520.0

During 1997-98, there has been a decline in the production of Groundnut, Rapeseed & Mustard and sunflower due to inclement weather, unseasonal continuous rains and cloudy weather during the sowing and growth period of the oilseed crops.

(b) The Govt. implemeting a Centrally Sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) for increasing the production and productivity of oilseeds and to check any decline in the production of oilseeds in the country. Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided for the critical inputs like production and distribution of seeds, distribution of seed minikits, sprinkler sets, improved farm implements, gypsum/ pyrites, micro-nutrients, rhyzobium culture etc. to the farmers through State Govts. In addition to this, frontline and general demonstrations are also organised on the farmers' fields to disseminate the improved production and protection technologies.

Verifying claims on Nuclear Tests

1272. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the article captioned "Margins of Error —Verifying claims on Nuclear Tests" which appeared in the "Times of India" dated 20th November, 1998; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The latest research papers by scientists of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) have conclusively shown that the total yield of the explosions on May 11 calculated by several different methods is about 60 kT. The papers have taken into account all available seismic data from around the world including the data mentioned in the article and also data from other close-in measurements carried out by Indian scientists. The above value for the total yield is in close agreement with the yields announced immdiately after the tests on May 11 of 15 kT for the fission device and 45 kT for the thermonuclear device (hydrogen bomb) and the sub-kiloton (less then one kiloton) device. Two more sub-kiloton devices were tested on May 13. All the five devices tested on May 11 and 13 were based on today's knowledge of Physics, Materials Science, Engineering and Electronics.

Objectives of Atomic Energy Act, 1962

1273. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that all nuclear and atomic energy related activites in the country have to be carried under the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962

(b) whether it is also a fact that the objective of the above mentioned act provides only for activities in the nuclear/ atomic energy sector only for peaceful purposes;

(c) whether actions contained in the Pokharan blasts in May 1998 and subsequent actions thereon are in keepping with the provisions of the said act; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?